

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Civil Works Review Board (CWRB), Salt River (Rio Salado Oeste), Phoenix, Maricopa County, Arizona Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

Date of CWRB: 18 October 2006

CWRB Members: MG Riley (DCW, Acting Chair), Steven Stockton (Acting DCW), Harry Kitch (Representing Planning CoP Leader), Ed Theriot (NAD RIT Leader) and Gerald Barnes (Operations Community of Practice Leader).

Key Participants:

HQUSACE: CWRB Member, Harry Kitch (Deputy Chief, Planning CoP), Office of Water Projects Review (Colosimo, Matusiak, Ware), Office of Counsel (Hostyk) & SPD RIT (Jester and Zwickl).

SPD (via VTC): Col (P) McMahon, Michael Bratlien, Lester Tong, Clark Frentzen.

SPL: Col Dornstauder, Ruth Villalobos, Ed Demesa, Scott Estergard, Gwen Meyer, Mike Hallisy.

City of Phoenix: Councilman Claude Mattox, Mike Ellegood, Rick Naimark, Lynn Timmons, Karen Williams, April Gromnicki (Audobon Society).

ASA(CW): Mark McKevitt.

OMB: Dick Fiesel.

OWPR Recommendation: Approval of the report for release for State and Agency review.

CWRB Decision Made: Approval of release of the report for State and Agency review.

Vote: Unanimous.

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Key Issues/Questions Raised by the CWRB:

1. DCW and Mr. Barnes asked how the recreation plan was developed, and if there is a formulation process for this? SPL explained that there is no formal formulation process, but the recreation plan limit is 10% of total project cost (the plan falls below this limit), and the plan was designed to enable the public to enjoy the ecosystem restoration without adversely impacting projected project outputs. The sponsor indicated the access points were selected based on road crossings and the system of trails was the minimum necessary to link with upstream and downstream river restoration reaches. The formulation question was deferred, for further pursuit by the Planning CoP as appropriate.

2. Mr. Barnes inquired about how invasive species will be managed. The district indicated that invasive species will be removed and such removals are included in the O&M plan.

3. DCW asked whether the Independent Technical Review involved the appropriate Planning Center of Expertise. SPL indicated the PCX was consulted early in the study process, but also noted the requirement for PCX involvement in ITR post-dated this study. DCW suggested that findings or lessons learned from this study should be shared with the appropriate PCX.

4. ASA(CW) representative asked whether the project was sustainable so far as the required water supply was concerned (There are a number of restoration projects proposed, under construction, or completed in the area that all require water). The district explained that the sponsor was required, and has agreed, to provide water to sustain the project, as an associated cost. The sponsor explained that the water resources plan for the region has been developed to ensure that water is made available for all competing uses. New State laws also play a part in how the water is allocated, including aquifer replenishment requirements. The sponsors indicated they were prepared to provide water to this project in perpetuity, and given the long process of planning and implementing these projects they could not envision a scenario whereby these type projects would be abandoned.

5. Mr. Stockton asked about tribal involvement. SPL indicated that coordination with the relevant tribes was accomplished through the public involvement process. The sponsors explained that the project falls entirely within the city of Phoenix, and tribal lands are not impacted. Mr. Theriot inquired about any cultural resources, such as tribal burial grounds, that may be impacted. SPL explained that none were found, most likely due to gravel mining operations in the area.

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6. Mr. Barnes asked if EPA had been involved at all since they had not provided a letter of comment on the study. SPL indicated EPA provided a “no comment” during draft EIS comment period, but other agencies such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service had provided comments. It was suggested that the Division office could be involved in coordinating review comments from regional offices of the relevant agencies during State and Agency review, if necessary.

7. ASA(CW) representative questioned whether any restoration could be considered “upland” instead of riparian. SPL indicated that care was taken to limit restoration activities to riparian habitat, with minimal buffer areas. ASA(CW) representative also stated that, given the claim of historical 90% loss of critical habitat, it would be interesting to see what the overall state-wide improvement, or reversal or the trend, would be as a result of the numerous restoration projects being proposed and/or constructed in the Tucson and Phoenix areas at a cost of roughly \$1B. Further, ASA(CW) indicated that their review would look closely at any features that reduce flood damage reduction to ensure project benefits and outputs are correctly categorized.

8. OMB representative indicated that the proposed project will compete with other projects, including other SPL projects and priorities may have to be established. Further, the OMB representative indicated that their review would include analysis of what agency should implement such a project. Perhaps the Bureau of Reclamation is more appropriate given their role in the basin in the past.

Other Issues of Note: None.

Actions Required prior to S&A Review : None.

Attachments: PowerPoint handouts (including District Engineer, Division Engineer, Sponsor and Office of Water Project Review briefs); Project Summary; DE Transmittal Letter; and Proposed Chief of Engineers Report.

Action Officer: K. Zwickl/761-4085